

**Amendments to the Specification** begin on page 3 of this paper.

**Remarks** begin on page 6 of this paper.

*Please replace the paragraph with the following replacement paragraph:  
on page 6, starting at line 10:*

FIG. 2A is a perspective view, partially cutaway, of a disposable absorbent diaper according to an implementation of the present invention.

*Please replace the paragraph with the following replacement paragraph:  
on page 6, starting at line 12:*

FIG. [2A] 2B is a vertical cross-sectional view of a target region 21' of the diaper shown in FIG. 2A.

*Please replace the paragraph with the following replacement paragraph:  
on page 18, starting at line 22:*

The present invention also provides improved disposable absorbent articles such as but not limited to diapers, sanitary napkins that incorporate the absorbent composite of the present invention. Disposable diaper articles are described in U.S. Patent Nos. 4,673,042; 5,147,343; 5,330,822;; 4,834,735; and 5,281,207, which are incorporated herein by reference for all purposes. A preferred disposable diaper, for the purpose of this invention, is shown in FIGS. [2] 2A and [2A] 2B. In accordance with FIGS. 2A and [2A] 2B, a disposable diaper 10 comprises a liquid impermeable back sheet 12, a liquid permeable top sheet 14 and an absorbent panel structure 16 positioned between the top sheet 14 and back sheet 12.

*Please replace the paragraph with the following replacement paragraph:  
on page 19, starting at line 6:*

In accordance with the present invention, in at least a layer of the absorbent panel, in a target region thereof indicated by circle 21', taken in the Z-direction thereof (i.e., in a

direction from top to bottom, away from the wearer), the superabsorbent material comprises a substantially continuous phase of the matrix. For purposes of this disclosure, the substantially continuous phase is provided wherein a sufficient quantity of particles of the superabsorbent material are in multiple point contact with each other, both prior to [sorption] absorption of liquid and thereafter, to thereby define a capillary network for facilitating liquid transport within the panel structure. A sufficiently small quantity of wood pulp fibers, preferably at least about 5 percent and no more than about 30 percent on a weight percentage basis, are intermixed with the superabsorbent material in the continuous phase. This quantity of wood pulp fiber acts to maintain the stability of the absorbent structure by integrating the region of the continuous phase of superabsorbent particles with adjacent portions of the absorbent structure. As a result, the target region of the absorbent panel structure, designated 20 in FIG. 2A, and which includes said layer, exhibits a free volume, at 600 seconds, of at least about 15 percent during finite volume absorbency under load (FVAUL) testing. The target region corresponds to the second and third fifths of the absorbent structure, measured from the front thereof.

*Please replace the paragraph with the following replacement paragraph:  
on page 19, starting at line 23:*

As shown in the cross-sectional view FIG. [2a] 2B, the layer of the absorbent matrix having the continuous phase portion 21' is preferably positioned between two layers, designated 22', each comprising predominantly wood pulp fibers. These layers 22' each comprise at least 80 percent and preferably as much as 95 percent or more, by weight basis, of wood pulp fibers. In the case of a diaper, the liquid permeable top sheet 14 allows urine to flow through the sheet to the absorbent panel structure 156 and also keeps the baby from directly contacting the

absorbent panel structure. This configuration provides more comfort for the baby and also helps to position the absorbent panel structure. Liquid permeable top sheets, and liquid impermeable back sheets, are well known to those skilled in the art, and these components can be suitably selected in practicing the present invention.

*Please replace the paragraph with the following replacement paragraph:  
on page 21, starting at line 14:*

The continuous phase portion 21' containing superabsorbent particulate material may be substantially continuous across the entire width and length of the absorbent structure. The continuous phase portion 21' containing superabsorbent material is preferably located in specific targeted areas within the absorbent structure, such a target region 20, extended along a longitudinal centerline of the absorbent structure of at least the second and third fifths of the length of the absorbent structure. The continuous phase portion 21' can extend outwardly from the longitudinal centerline toward the side marginal edges of the article at least 20 percent-100 percent of the width of the absorbent structure, and preferably about 50 percent-70 percent. Because superabsorbent material is one of the most costly components of an absorbent structure, efficient use and positioning of the material is beneficial. Specific positioning, of the superabsorbent material in areas most likely to be insulted with urine allows for the most cost effective utilization of this component. Specific positioning of superabsorbent material can be accomplished through any of several methods, such as by the method and apparatus as described and claimed in U.S. Patent 5,279,854, which is incorporated herein by reference. This specific positioning creates a target region 20 shown in FIG. [2] 2A.